

Potential Project and Research Topics – ACIAR PASS-CR Scholarship Program 2024

Table of Contents

Climate Change.....	1
Crops	3
Horticulture	4
Livestock Systems.....	6
Fisheries	7
Social Systems	8
Soil and Land Management	9

Climate Change

ACIAR Project Number - [CLIM/2020/186](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Sustainable agricultural intensification systems (SI) for climate resilient development in Pacific Island countries

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	SI intervention for improving soil health under taro-based farming system in Samoa and taro-yam-sweet potato-based farming system in Tonga	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
PhD	SI interventions for increasing profitability and resilience of Taro based farming systems in Samoa	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Samoa

PhD	SI interventions for increasing profitability and resilience of yam-sweet potato-taro based farming systems in Tonga	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Tonga
Masters	Comparison of SI intervention for two farming systems (taro only and taro-yam-sweet potato) in Samoa and Tonga	Dr Dorin Gupta University of Melbourne Dorin.gupta@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Leslie Ubaub Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
PhD	Applying crop models to explore potential use of SI interventions as climate change adaptation/mitigation strategies for taro farming systems in Samoa and Tonga	Dr Viliamu Iese University of Melbourne Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
Masters	Understanding the decision-making context of farmers, and enablers for early adoption of SI to improve resilient livelihoods of farmers in Samoa and Tonga	Dr Viliamu Iese University of Melbourne Viliamu.iese@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj Dr Philip Sagero Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj	Samoa and Tonga
Masters or PhD	Scoping study - integrated crop-livestock farming to improve smallholder livelihoods and food security	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj Dr Philip Sagero Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj	Samoa
Masters or PhD	Nutritional interventions for methane emissions reduction in livestock and productivity gains	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Samoa
Masters or PhD	Adaptive and productive sheep breeds for changing climate in PICs	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Samoa
PhD	Impact of climate change induced heat stress on livestock production in PICs and strategies for mitigation	Dr Surinder Chauhan University of Melbourne ss.chauhan@unimelb.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj Dr Philip Sagero	Samoa

			Philip.sagero@usp.ac.fj	
PhD	Gender and sustainable agricultural intensification - an institutional analysis for Tonga/Samoa	Dr Gayathri Mekala University of Melbourne Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Viliamu Iese Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj	Samoa, Tonga
Masters	Gender-based constraints and capacity building for scaling up the adoption of sustainable agriculture intensification practices in Samoa/Tonga	Dr Gayathri Mekala University of Melbourne Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Viliamu Iese Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj	Samoa, Tonga
PhD	Building social resilience and food security through sustainable agriculture intensification in Samoa/Tonga	Dr Gayathri Mekala University of Melbourne Gayathri.mekala@unimelb.edu.au	Dr Viliamu Iese Viliamu.iese@usp.ac.fj	Samoa, Tonga

ACIAR Project Number - [CLIM/2022/174](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Scoping the governance and co-benefits of circular food-energy systems in Pacific Island Countries

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Assessment of waste, energy, food flows of biogas system	Dr Federico Davila University of Technology Sydney Federico.davila@uts.edu.au		Fiji

Crops

ACIAR Project Number – [CROP/2021/130](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Finding a genetic basis for oil palm responses to Basal Stem Rot in a long-term infected block

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Effects beyond the crop – social and economic impacts of oil palm pests and diseases on smallholders in Solomon Islands	Dr Agnieszka Mudge University of Queensland a.mugde@uq.edu.au	Dr Leslie Ubaub Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj Dr Isoa Korovulavula Isoa.korovulavula@usp.ac.fj	Solomon Islands

Horticulture

ACIAR Project Number - CS/2020/191

ACIAR Project Title - Adopting a gender-inclusive participatory approach to reducing horticultural food loss in the Pacific

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Assessing the efficacy of value chain interventions on reducing food loss in the Pacific	Prof Steven Underhill University of the Sunshine Coast sunderhi@usc.edu.au	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
Masters or PhD	Sustainable practices in supply chain evaluations and development: A stakeholder perspective	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
Masters or PhD	Circular economy and community capital: a cultural lens approach	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands

Masters or PhD	New product innovation: valuing all voices in ideation	Dr Saskia De Klerk University of the Sunshine Coast sdeklerk@usc.edu.au	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Samoa Fiji Tonga Solomon Islands
-----------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------

ACIAR Project Number - [HORT/2017/025](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Safeguarding and deploying coconut diversity for improving livelihoods in the Pacific Islands

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Nutritional analysis of selected coconut varieties from Fiji	Dr Carmel Pilotti Pacific Community carmelp@spc.int	Prof Surendra Prasad Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj	Fiji
PhD	Development of a mobile application to track coconut and intercrop yields in smallholder farming systems	Dr Carmel Pilotti Pacific Community carmelp@spc.int	Dr Leslie Ubaub Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Fiji, Tonga, Samoa

ACIAR Project Number - [HORT/2018/195](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Improving root crop resilience and biosecurity in Pacific Island countries and Australia

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Evaluating innovative technologies for virus diagnostic methodologies to sweet potato clean seed systems	Dr Julie O'Halloran Queensland Department of Agriculture and Forestry julie.Ohalloran@daf.qld.gov.au	Dr Leslie Ubaub Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Fiji

Livestock Systems

ACIAR Project Number – [LS/2018/185](#)

ACIAR Project Title – A farm planning approach to increase productivity and profitability of smallholder cattle systems in Vanuatu

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Weed control strategies for smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	Dr Shane Campbell Central Queensland University Shane.campbell@uq.edu.au	Dr Leslie Ubaub Lesliet.ubaub@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Growth and puberty of different heifer genotypes in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Use of on-animal technology for traceability (or management) of cattle in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Small agribusiness options to support development in the beef industry in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Investigation of low reproduction rates on smallholder cattle farms in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Development of a forage budgeting tool for smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Carbon accounting in cattle-coconut systems in Vanuatu	Dr Simon Quigley Central Queensland University s.quigley@cqu.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	Influence of gender on decision making in farm planning	Dr Severine van Bommel University of Queensland	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu
Masters	Communication and facilitation strategies to support adoption of practice change by smallholder cattle farmers in Vanuatu	Dr Severine van Bommel University of Queensland	Ass Prof Siaka Diarra Siaka.diarra@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu

Fisheries

ACIAR Project Number – FIS/2018/154

ACIAR Project Title – Improving peri-urban and remote inland fish farming in Papua New Guinea to benefit both community-based and commercial operators

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Project Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters	A sustainable livelihoods and SWOT analysis of small-holder, pond-based fish farming in Fiji	Ass Prof Jes Sammut University of New South Wales	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj Dr Rajesh Prasad Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj	Fiji

ACIAR Project Number – [FIS/2019/122](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Towards more profitable and sustainable mabe pearl and shell-based livelihoods in the western Pacific

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Project Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
---------	-------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------	--------------------

PhD	Assessing potential production, social and environmental benefits of novel culture systems for mabe pearl culture	Professor Paul Southgate University of the Sunshine Coast psouthgate@usc.edu.au Dr Thane Militz University of the Sunshine Coast tmilitz@usc.edu.au	Dr Brian Stockwell Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj Dr Rajesh Prasad Rajesh.prasad@usp.ac.fj	Fiji and Tonga
PhD	Genetic structure and population connectivity of the winged pearl oyster in Fiji and Tonga	Professor Paul Southgate University of the Sunshine Coast psouthgate@usc.edu.au Dr Thane Militz University of the Sunshine Coast tmilitz@usc.edu.au	Dr Brian Stockwell Brian.stockwell@usp.ac.fj	Fiji and Tonga

Social Systems

ACIAR Project Number - [SSS/2018/136](#)

ACIAR Project Title – Improving agricultural development opportunities for female smallholders in rural Solomon Islands

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Exploring changes in food and nutritional security in family farm team participants	Ass Prof Deborah Hill University of Canberra Deborah.Hill@canberra.edu.au	Dr Sonny Lameta Sonny.lameta@usp.ac.fj	Solomon Islands

ACIAR Project Number - [SSS/2019/140](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Landcare: an agricultural extension and community development model at district and national scale in Fiji

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Agroforestry-based ecosystem services	Dr Mary Johnson RMIT mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au	Dr Isoa Korovulavula Isoa.korovulavula@usp.ac.fj	Fiji
Masters or PhD	Policy implications driving soil degradation: a case of dalo and yagona farming in Taveuni Island, Fiji	Dr Mary Johnson RMIT mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj Prof Surendra Prasad Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj	Fiji

ACIAR Project Number - SSS/2021/120

ACIAR Project Title – Climate-smart regenerative ridge to reef landscapes for sustaining livelihoods of communities on custom land and food security in Vanuatu

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
PhD	Traditional gardening systems and their contribution to biodiversity and climate resilience	Dr Cherise Addinsall University of the Sunshine Coast Caddinsall@usc.edu.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj Prof Surendra Prasad Surendra.prasad@usp.ac.fj	Vanuatu

Soil and Land Management

ACIAR Project Number – [SLAM/2020/139](#)

ACIAR Project Title - Soil management in Pacific Islands: investigating nutrient dynamics and the utility of soil information for better soil and farming system management – Pacific Soil Portal Phase 2

Program	Possible Research Topic	ACIAR Co-Supervisor	USP Supervisor/s	Fieldwork Location
Masters or PhD	Towards sustainable farmscapes through geospatial mapping	Dr Ross Searle CSIRO	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Samoa Tonga Fiji
Masters or PhD	Using taro macro and micronutrient contents linking soils to human nutrition	Dr Ben Macdonald CSIRO ben.macdonald@csiro.au	Ass Prof Md. Abdul Kader Mdabdul.kader@usp.ac.fj	Samoa Tonga Fiji